



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Pinedale Region

February 2018 Newsletter

Elk Ecology Research Continues

Jackson and Pinedale personnel in the Game and Fish Department's Brucellosis-Feedgrounds-Habitat (BFH) darted elk on the Jewett feedground in the Wyoming Range west of Daniel. Adult cow elk were tranquilized from the hay sled and fitted with a GPS collar to document fine-scale movements over the next 2-3 years.

In addition, blood samples were collected to continue long-term brucellosis seroprevalence trend data. This information is also useful for developing elk seasonal range maps, determining areas of high brucellosis transmission risk and providing land managers with additional information to make better resource management decisions.

The collars are continually recovered and refurbished with new batteries and drop-off mechanisms and redeployed to continue to collect GPS data on elk. The Game and Fish Department's BFH program personnel, with collaborators from Iowa State University and the University of Wyoming, have collected a total of over 600 years of GPS collar data from elk captured on 20 feedgrounds and seven native winter range sites adjacent to feedgrounds from 2007 to 2018.



(Top) BFH Biologist Jared Rogerson prepares to land a tranquilizer dart in the rump of a cow elk. (Above) Wildlife Biologist Gary Fralick draws a blood sample from an elk before fitting it with a GPS collar. (Left) Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas fastens an ear tag before a reversal drug is administered and the cow elk heads back to the herd (Right)





Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

February 2018



Counting the Herds

Winter is typically the time when wildlife managers conduct their big game counts because animals are concentrated on their winter ranges. This makes it easier for wildlife managers to get a good count on the herds, which can be quite large. Counts are conducted from both the ground and the air. Managers not only count the total number of animals, but also classify them as males, females and young of the year.

With the unusually mild winter, especially at the lower elevations, many of the elk feedgrounds in the Pinedale and Jackson regions are showing lower numbers of elk with many animals choosing to winter out on available native winter range. Initial counts from feedgrounds in the Piney elk herd, those animals on the east slope of the Wyoming Range, are showing that those numbers are down. Of course, the question is how many elk are wintering out, but these animals can be hard to find, even from the air. Bottom line, counts on an open year like this should be taken with a grain of salt.

Moving Elk

North Pinedale Game Warden Bubba Haley responded to several complaints of elk damage and elk commingling with livestock throughout his district north of Pinedale. Multiple efforts to move and haze elk away from haystacks had limited success. Due to the lack of snow, it has been more difficult to maneuver and haze elk to area feedgrounds. In one instance, a helicopter was used (Right) to move approximately 70 elk to the Soda Lake feedground, which alleviated some chronic damage issues. However, Haley reports that due to the relatively open winter, elk remain scattered throughout the Willow Creek and New Fork drainages.

Photos by Bubba Haley





Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

February 2018



Fish On!

Pinedale Fish Biologist Darren Rhea reports good ice fishing as of late in the Pinedale area. Darren (Left) hoists a nice 36 inch lake trout pulled from Boulder Lake recently. The nice catch of rainbows (Below) came from Green River Lake.

Anglers are encouraged to pay attention to ice conditions, especially as we move into spring. Interestingly, portions of Fremont Lake still hadn't frozen as of the writing of this newsletter.



FIVE ICE TIPS

1. CHECK THICKNESS

Contact a local bait shop or sporting goods store to ask about ice conditions and then check once you get there. The rough guidelines for clear, new solid ice are:

- 2 inches – Stay off
- 4 inches – OK for ice fishing or other activities on foot
- Check the thickness of the ice every 100 to 150 feet.
- Never take any vehicles, snowmobiles or ATVs onto the ice.

2. BE SURE IT'S SAFE

- Avoid pressure ridges in the ice and large cracks that can emerge in a lake
- Clear ice is stronger than white ice, which has frozen, thawed and refrozen and is not always stable
- White ice can also be from air bubbles or frozen snow and is much weaker than clear ice. For white ice, double the recommended thickness.

3. REMEMBER

No matter your preparation and ice conditions, ice should never be considered 100 percent safe. Be prepared and cautious at all times.

4. BUDDY SYSTEM

Anglers should never fish alone. Always fish with someone else and be certain to let a friend know where you are going.

5. STAY WARM

To prevent hypothermia if an ice fishing accident does occur, pack an extra set of clothes and hot liquids.

PRACTICE ICE SAFETY



What else should I know?

Fluctuating water levels in reservoirs and wind impact ice conditions and can create dangerous ice conditions. Be aware of recent weather conditions and temperatures and scout out the lake you wish to fish for overflow, wet areas, and open water. With variable ice conditions across the state and rapidly changing conditions, anglers are urged to call their regional office to inquire about ice conditions.

Game and Fish discourages driving any motorized vehicle on a frozen lake as well as ice fishing on rivers and or other

moving water that has frozen over. Remember to wear a lifejacket or personal flotation device and carry ice safety picks. Ice cleats are also a good idea. Keep a throw rope handy in case someone falls in.

Anglers venturing on fishing trips this winter should also keep in mind the Fishing Regulations and the Special Winter Ice Fishing Provisions, available on the Game and Fish website at wgfd.wyo.gov, regional offices and Cheyenne Headquarters.



Contact Game & Fish

Cheyenne Headquarters: 1-800-842-1934

Casper Regional Office: 1-800-233-8544

Cody Regional Office: 1-800-654-1178

Green River Regional Office: 1-800-843-8096

Jackson Regional Office: 1-800-423-4113

Lander Regional Office: 1-800-654-7862

Laramie Regional Office: 1-800-843-2352

Pinedale Regional Office: 1-800-452-9107

Sheridan Regional Office: 1-800-331-9834



Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

February 2018

THE ULTIMATE HUNTING ADVENTURE

WYOMING'S SUPER TAG RAFFLE OFFERS 10 SPECIES AND 11 CHANCES TO WIN



Super Tag tickets: \$10
Super Tag Triecta tickets: \$30

Deadline to apply is July 2, 2018

Raffle winners must purchase any applicable licenses and/or stamps before hunting.

ENTER NOW



2017 SUPER TAG TRIECTA WINNER
ZACK DEBERARD

Don't Forget to Apply for the Wyoming Super Tag

In 2017, the raffle raised \$820,130 for wildlife conservation in Wyoming! A total of 13,646 individuals participated in the raffle purchas-

ing 62,551 Super Tag tickets. This represents a 16% increase in individual participation and an 18% increase in ticket sales from 2016. The Department is again offering the "Ultimate Hunting Gear Raffle" as an incentive to purchase more tickets. Individuals are entered into this raffle each time they purchase 5 or more

2018 Wyoming Outdoor Hall of Fame Inductees to be Honored

Join us in Cody at the Buffalo Bill Center for the West on Thursday, March 15, for the Wyoming Outdoor Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Doors open at 5 p.m.; dinner begins at 6 p.m. Tickets and tables available for purchase online.

The primary purpose of the Hall of Fame is to honor those individuals, both living and posthumously, who have made significant, lasting lifetime contributions to the conservation of Wyoming's outdoor heritage.

Each year, recognition is given to a select few people who have worked consistently over many years to conserve Wyoming's natural resources through volunteer service, environmental restoration, educational activities, audio/visual and written media, the arts, and political and individual leadership.

Another goal of the Hall of Fame is to educate the public about, and promote the significance of, Wyoming's rich outdoor heritage. Inductees will be solid role models for today's youth.



2018 Hall of Fame Inductees

- Gary B. Butler
- William G. Hepworth
- Dr. George T. Baxter (posthumously)



Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

February 2018

From the Front Desk

Pinedale Game and Fish office managers Lori Johnson and Kristen Draney would like to remind resident and non-residents hunters they have until February 28 to get their applications in for bighorn sheep, moose, mountain goat and bison. Good luck!



Daniel Hatchery Improves Water

Water quality is obviously integral to a fish hatchery producing quality fish. The Daniel Hatchery recently completed six months worth of upgrades to improve their water quality, which will in turn produce healthier fish, not to say the fish they were producing before were unhealthy.

The new equipment will perform three basic functions: 1) a degasser (Above Right) will take out all gases from the incoming water, including nitrogen, which is generally has negative effects on fish, 2) An oxygenator (Middle Left) will allow the ability to add valuable oxygen back into the water at what ever level is desired, and 3) an Ultraviolet Drum Filter (Lower Left), which will treat the water with ultra-violet light, removing any bacteria that could afflict fish with a variety of diseases.

These types of water quality upgrades are being implemented at various Wyoming fish hatcheries as funding becomes available.

